

March, “Manhattan Beach”

John Philip Sousa

After spending twelve years as the seventeenth director of “The President’s Own” from 1880 to 1892, John Philip Sousa went on to form his own civilian band at the urging of concert promoter David Blakely. Sousa enjoyed tremendous success with his Sousa Band, traveling extensively throughout the continental United States and abroad. During the heyday of the Sousa Band in the early part of the twentieth century, the group would often perform in residence at well-known resorts and at national expositions.

One such summer retreat was New York’s famous Manhattan Beach, a resort at which the Sousa Band spent several seasons providing the featured entertainment. In 1893, Sousa dedicated a march to the establishment and its proprietor, Austin Corbin. This march was quickly adopted by bands throughout the world, but it was rarely played in the unusual manner that the “March King” himself often performed it. In Sousa’s own personal interpretation, the last half of the march is a short descriptive piece. The trio’s bubbling arpeggios imitate the waves of the ocean lapping against the shore during a walk along the beach. The waves first get louder and louder, but then fade away as the walk continues down the shore.